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COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN THE GUIDANCE OF SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH.

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BECAUSE THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATING SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN EXTEND FAR BEYOND CLASSROOM WALLS, GUIDANCE COUNSELORS MUST CONSIDER THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL FACTORS WHICH AFFECT THE LIVES OF THESE CHILDREN. IN GUIDING THE NEGRO CHILD, FOR EXAMPLE, THE COUNSELOR SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS WHICH THIS CHILD'S FAMILY FACES. TO DEAL WITH THESE AND THE OTHER PROBLEMS WHICH AFFECT THE DISADVANTAGED CHILD'S SCHOOL PERFORMANCE (MANY DROP OUT OR BECOME DELINQUENT), GUIDANCE PERSONNEL SHOULD MAKE WIDER USE OF THE SERVICES OF THE COMMUNITY AGENCIES WHICH ARE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE DISADVANTAGED. THE URBAN LEAGUE, FOR EXAMPLE, COOPERATES WITH SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND COMMUNITY GROUPS TO DEVELOP DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS, ARRANGES VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CAMPAIGNS, AND CONSULTS WITH OTHER CONCERNED ORGANIZATIONS. BESIDES THE URBAN LEAGUE, THERE ARE MANY FEDERAL AND STATE ORGANIZATIONS, LIKE THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH AND THE OHIO CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION, WHICH CAN HELP COUNSEL DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN AND YOUTH. SCHOOLS, HOWEVER, DO NOT MAKE WIDE USE OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS OR OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN GENERAL, POSSIBLY BECAUSE ADMINISTRATORS "FEAR" COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT REQUIRES CROSSING RACIAL LINES. (LB)

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN THE GUIDANCE OF SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

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This title suggests two important considerations which should be included in the planning of educators as they seek to develop the experience of equality through education. The first consideration is that educators should be working cooperatively with constructive forces outside of the school as a supplement to the efforts within. The second consideration implies that a certain segment of our school population may require special help, even going beyond the accepted tools and techniques utilized by guidance counselors, if education adequate for the needs of these children is to be fostered.

It must be rather obvious to all of us that any school program today, if it is to be effective in holding more students and equipping them for the challenge of the times, must be a total program - a venture utilizing the experiences of both the school and the community. The isolation maintained in the past by schools on the grounds that "we do not want to invite outside meddling pressure groups, we have enough trouble as it is," has not been without some justification. There are presently, and probably will always be, many forces trying to get into the schools and to subvert them for a multitude of reasons. This is particularly evident in the current campaign to censor textbooks in many parts of the country. Our schools must be ever vigilant to these invasions from without. On the other hand, these schools must undergo a constant process of evaluation of the true purpose of education as it relates to the needs of the times. In so doing it can only come to the inescapable conclusion that many of the current problems associated with the

education of certain groups of children, especially in our large urban areas, are problems which extend far beyond the walls of the classroom. And, if the counselor or the teacher is to be effective in the discharge of his or her responsibilities to these children, he will want to know of selected community resources with experiences which can buttress these efforts, and he will actively solicit their help and cooperation for the performance of his tasks.

Let us pause for a moment to see who these children are, and why they are now called the "socially disadvantaged" and why they need special help.

These children represent all or most races which make up our society. However, a growing and disproportionate percentage of these children happen to be Negro, as compared with their percentage in the total population. This significant fact has been reported in studies by Dr. James B. Conant, and by observations of school officials in city after city. Why do these children present problems deserving of the special attention of school guidance personnel?

A brief review of the social and economic characteristics of Negro family life in America will provide us with some clues to our question:

> Negroes earn less than whites. The median annual income for the Negro family today is only $3,233, as compared with $5,835 for whites - a gap of 45 per cent. This gap has increased since 1952 when it was only 43 per cent.
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> More than 75 per cent of all Negro workers are still in the lowest occupational categories - service workers, semi-skilled and unskilled laborers and farm workers are in these categories. And these are the very categories now drastically

affected by automation and technological change.

In 1962, only 8 per cent of non-white males, as compared to more than 27 per cent of white males, were employed in professional and managerial occupations outside of agriculture. Only 9 per cent of non-white males could be classified as skilled craftsmen or foremen, as compared to 20 per cent of white males.

The lower earning power of Negro men and the more frequent breakup of Negro families under both social and economic stress make it necessary for more Negro than white women to enter the job market. One in every four Negro women with pre-school children is at work, not at home. And yet we wonder about some of the causes of school dropouts and its natural consequence, juvenile delinquency.

As a result, more Negro youth drop out of high school than white youth, and fewer Negro high school graduates enter college. During one of the most recent school years, Negroes who constitute something less than 11 per cent of the total population supplied 21 per cent of the school dropouts, but only 7 per cent of the high school graduates.

Nationwide, Negro young people constitute about 15 per cent of the total youth population between the ages of 16 and 21, and yet are 50 per cent of the youth population in this age bracket who are both out of school and unemployed.

One of every six Negro dwelling units in the nation is dilapidated, obsolete or otherwise substandard as compared to one in 32 white dwellings.

This despicable condition is hardly conducive to good study habits.

Even the most cursory reflection on the great social and economic gap between two groups of Americans with otherwise equal potential reveals the crippling effect of prejudice and discrimination.

In a real sense, Negro children have been spawned in a cesspool of national indifference to their hopes and aspirations. The social order has established a caste system forged along racial lines and one which has established a value system for these children which determines their "place." This definition of "place" unfortunately has been passed along by many parents, not as a satisfying goal of personal attainment but as a prime requirement for mere survival in a hostile environment. Thus, even in a changing social order the plight of Negro children is far graver than that of white children in the schools.

The rapidly changing social order since World War II has now thrust upon the shoulders of the schools the colossal task of picking up the pieces resulting from a systematic destruction of human life, and now molding these children into the efficient mechanism which is their God-given birthright. The challenge is one for education as well as for the community, and unless help is immediately forthcoming, a larger proportion of these school children will join the ranks of those suffering from dependency and frustration, and they in turn will raise their offspring in their own stunted image.

According to Dr. Dennis Trueblood, the role of the counselor in the guidance of Negro students must be affected by his special knowledge of the needs of Negroes. This knowledge can be gained only by studying the psycho-

logical and sociological background of the Negro. With such knowledge and the knowledge about experiences of community agencies and other educators in the guidance of the Negro student, the counselor, in terms of both process and content, will better be able to function successfully with the Negro student.

In this connection, the Urban League for more than 52 years has certainly been in the forefront among private organizations desperately striving to lift the sights of our nation's youth. It is uniquely equipped through program emphases in education and youth incentives, job development and employment, housing and health and welfare services, to help guidance personnel understand and cope with their problems.

In cooperation with schools, colleges, and community groups, the Urban League has pioneered many community demonstration projects aimed at pointing up the "how" of adequately reaching Negro youth. Its vocational guidance program for Negro students in Miami, Florida, in the Forties was the first for any children in Dade County, Negro or white, and paved the way for such programs for all within the entire County. The Urban League Vocational Opportunity Campaigns at the community level go back to 1930, and the pace-setting Back-to-School Campaigns were the forerunner of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's current Stay-in-School Campaign. Consultations with school administrators, in-service institutes on minority youth guidance, parent clinics, career conferences at both the secondary and college levels, the production of audio-visual aids for youth and their parents, have all been part of this effort. The Talent Bank Youth Incentive Program is the Urban League's nationally projected equivalent to New York City's Higher Horizons, with the important ingredient of wide community involvement. The Urban League motion picture "A Morning For Jimmy" has been viewed

by a television audience of more than 8 million persons in two years and has become a permanent addition to the film collections of many schools and public libraries.

In January of this year representatives of the National Urban League met in historic conference with Francis Keppel, Commissioner, U.S. Office of Education, to express concern over the educational problems of youth in our urban areas; and to submit recommendations calling for the strengthening of our local institutions.

Only two weeks ago in Boston, the director of guidance for the Milwaukee public schools reported to the APGA Convention on an exciting program for disadvantaged youth being conducted in that city. The program was developed by the Urban League and is being implemented through a $50,000 grant from business and industry.

There are other valuable resources which can be utilized by schools in the guidance of socially disadvantaged youth. To name a few, the National Committee on Children and Youth offers consultation on problems of youth employment. Various state commissions against discrimination, or commissions on human rights, are excellent sources for interpretation of employment conditions and opportunities for minority youth. Recently the Ohio Civil Rights Commission and the Ohio State Board of Education rendered a significant national service when it published "Counseling Minority Youth," a guide for developing the experience of equality through education. Although the publication was designed for the specific needs of school counselors in Ohio, most of the information is applicable throughout the country. It is available at cost from Ohio Scholarship Tests,

751 Northwest Boulevard, Columbus, Ohio.

The United States Department of Labor and the many state divisions of Employment Security are more than eager to provide specific factual information related to the problems and needs of these children. To this list of government agencies must be added the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and this author predicts that the Office of Education will step up its services to local institutions on specific problems of minority youth guidance.

Counselors should not overlook the support of many social, civic and fraternal organizations of Negro leadership whose efforts have already made the tasks faced by some schools a lot easier. These organizations include the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, composed of Negro college women who supported the recent efforts in Oregon which led to the Nancy Weimmer Award given by NVGA for outstanding contributions to vocational guidance in 1962.

In this all too brief paper an attempt has been made to present a broad dimension to what is admittedly a national problem as a perspective in justification for the use of community resources in the guidance of socially disadvantaged youth.

No attempt has been made to exhaust all the constructive resources which are currently available to school personnel in guidance if these personnel will but reach out into the community for help.

One of the biggest handicaps limiting this "reaching out process" has been a fear reaction on the part of some school personnel which has conditioned them to stay behind closed doors. This reaction has resulted either in a breakdown of, or in a failure to develop effective communication with helpful

interests in the community. This is especially true when this communication must cut across racial lines.

The United States has become the first nation in history with the resources sufficient to eliminate poverty from its shores. There is no longer any real excuse for human blight, and we must avoid the error of human blunder. It should, therefore, be an acceptable challenge to school guidance personnel to avail themselves of every resource in the community necessary for the performance of their tasks, for the solution to this problem must involve all institutions within our society.

The future output of today's youth in contribution to the millrace of tomorrow's adult responsibilities and national progress will be only in direct proportion to the degree of motivational input, or lack of it, provided by their total community environment. As educators and as community leaders, we cannot fail in this responsibility.